



# Vulnerable Persons Policy

To help ensure the safety of our members, and in line with best practice, the Guelph-Wellington Time Bank has established this vulnerable person's policy. We are asking all members offering to read the policy and sign it to say that they understand and will adhere to this policy.

## **Definition of a Vulnerable Person:**

A vulnerable person is any person who may be unable to take care of or protect him/herself against harm or exploitation. This may be due to age, illness or disability.

## **Guelph-Wellington Time Bank Vulnerable Person's Policy.**

Members of the Guelph-Wellington Time Bank (GWTB) adhere to the following principles:

- Members have the right to a safe environment where they are treated with respect, dignity and privacy.
- Members do not discriminate against other members of the Guelph-Wellington Time Bank. Everyone is welcome to participate in the GWTB regardless of their race, gender, ability, age, sexual orientation or religious and cultural beliefs as long as they adhere to the principles outlined in this policy.
- Members do not use physical restraint.
- Members do not use any form of touching unless to prevent personal injury to the person or others.
- Members will not betray confidences without grave suspicions and if possible with the consent of the person involved.
- Members do not use unacceptable language.
- Abuse, physical or verbal punishment or chastisement, inappropriate touching and exclusive or secretive relationships are not allowed and may be reported to the appropriate authorities if grooming or other suspicious behavior is suspected.
- Members are encouraged to report any suspicion or incidence of abuse to a Guelph-Wellington Time Bank coordinator. Any reported suspicion or incident will be taken seriously and will be fully recorded. The Time Bank coordinator will then contact the appropriate authorities to take the matter forward in line with their procedures.
- Members not adhering to the Vulnerable Persons Policy will have their membership reviewed and may be told to leave the GWTB.

## **Perpetrators of Abuse**

Vulnerable people may be abused by a wide range of people including relatives, professional staff, care workers, volunteers, neighbors and friends of strangers. Some perpetrators may deliberately target vulnerable people.

## **Types of Abuse**

The GWTB recognizes that there may be many types of abuse including:

Physical Abuse – *either directly inflicted or knowingly not prevented.*

Psychological Abuse – *including verbal abuse, humiliation or bullying.*

Sexual Abuse – *including inappropriate touching.*

Discriminatory Abuse – *abuse linked to a person's sex, race, age, and cultural or religious status.*

Financial Abuse – *seeking inappropriate financial gain.*

Deliberate Neglect – *failing to provide appropriate care.*

## **Confidentiality**

The GWTB recognizes that individuals have the right to confidentiality. Therefore, any personal information divulged between individuals should be treated with respect and not discussed amongst others without the consent of the person.

However, in cases of suspected abuse, the best interest of the person involved and other potential victims may override the duty of confidentiality. In such circumstances, the consent of the vulnerable person should be obtained first if at all possible. Care should be taken to check that the person understands the consequences of sharing (or not sharing) the information.

Information should only be shared on a “need to know basis” – for example reporting suspicions to one of the staff of the Guelph-Wellington Time Bank or appropriate authorities.

## **Background Checks**

The Guelph-Wellington Time Bank will conduct a background check on all members, in the form of a character reference. It is the right of members who are themselves (or who are acting for) a vulnerable person to request to see a Police Record Check before entering into an exchange; however, this is a private arrangement between two GWTB members, and not the responsibility of the Guelph-Wellington Time Bank.

I have read and understand this policy:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_